

CLAIMS

1. A method of scanning an object comprising the steps of:
 - 5 providing a scanning device (21) having a probe (24) and a sample holder (29) whereby the sample holder is rotatable relative to the probe;
providing a first feature for indicating the start and/or end of a scan; and
 - 10 recognising the first feature whereby when the first feature is recognised the scanning device (21) is ready to start or end the scan.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein, the
15 scanning device (21) has a fixed stop which defines a known relationship between the probe (24) and the sample holder (26).
3. A method according to claim 2 wherein, the fixed
20 stop comprises the first feature.
4. A method according to claim 3 wherein, the fixed stop indicates the start of a scan.
- 25 5. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein, the first feature is provided on the scanning device (21).
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein, the
30 scanning device further comprises a fixture (29) for at least partially housing an object.
7. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein, the first feature is provided on the object (27,30).

8. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein,
the first feature indicates the start of a scan and on
recognition of the first feature the scanning device
5 (21) is ready to start a scan and the method further
comprises the steps of:

providing a second feature for indicating the end
of the scan; and

10 recognising the second feature whereby when the
second feature is recognised the scanning device (21)
is ready to end the scan.

9. A method according to claim 8 wherein, the second
feature is provided on the scanning device (21).
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10. A method according to claim 9 wherein, the
scanning device (21) further comprises a fixture (29)
for at least partially housing an object.

20 11. A method according to claim 8 wherein, the second
feature is provided on the object.

12. A method according to claim 8 wherein, the second
feature comprises a datum stop.
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13. A method according to claim 1 wherein, a scan
automatically starts or ends when the scanning device
recognises the first feature.

30 14. A method according to any of claims 8 to 12
wherein, a scan automatically ends when the scanning
device recognises the second feature.

15. An apparatus for scanning an object comprising:

a scanning device (21) having a probe (24) and a sample holder (26) whereby the sample holder is rotatable relative to the probe; and

5 a control device (10) for controlling relative motion between the probe and sample holder and for recognising a first feature whereby the control device starts and/or ends a scan on the basis of recognising the first feature.